As a result of submission of the below questions and further review of the statement of work (SOW), the following changes were made to the SOW.

Page 13, section 6.2: deleted
Pages 17 through 19, Sections 12 and 13 are deleted. These sections duplicate Section 15.
Section 15.4 has been updated
Section 15.6: Delete "See Attachment 1"
Section 15.9 : Table: Delete FY 00 and corresponding quantity. Quantity for FY 01 increased to 3.
Page 24, Part I: add sentence " This section may also contain a Best Value Statement depicting why the offeror feels the software proposed offers the best value to the Government.
Page 24, Part III: change reference to Section 15.2.4

Questions and Responses:

1. Will the BPA be a single or multiple award?

Response: Reference Sections 15.13 and 15.15

2. How many firms are expected to bid? Who are they?

Response: The number and names of the firms expecting to bid is unknown.

3. What email system(s) other than MS Outlook will the e-mail management system need to be integrated with?

Response: The system will need to work with Microsoft Exchange server. There will be no POP3 access.

4. Is the e-mail management system anticipated to be a DFAS corporate standard or will it vary by site?

Response: There is a single email system which services all DFAS users. It uses Exchange servers and Outlook clients.

5. Beyond email, what level of interoperability will be required with what systems (e.g.: the enterprise management system)?

Response: A strategic goal of DFAS is to develop a homogeneous organization and network infrastructure as part of the DFAS enterprise. The e-mail management system must be interoperable with current and future applications. Therefore, the level of interoperability of the e-mail management system within the DFAS enterprise is high.

6. What are the immediate operational, maintenance, training, or other support requirements for the 90-day target date?

Response: DFAS is anticipating operational, maintenance, training and other support requirements within the target dates.

7. Who is responsible for configuration management - i.e., if there are any changes to the email system, or any other system that affects the DFAS customer service environment, what responsibilities will the contractor have for the necessary configuration changes? Is there a plan/defined process for incorporating future enhancements?

Response: Configuration management is the responsibility of the DFAS Infrastructure Services Organization (ISO). Changes to the e-mail management system will be coordinated through the ISO and other DFAS components. The contractor is responsible for system software upgrades and maintenance.

8. Page 11, paragraph 4.6 - What functional "consulting" services should be considered – will this incorporate services such as business process review and cost estimation/economic analysis?

Response: Consulting will be accomplished by assisting DFAS with proper installation of software and recommended utilization of software. No services for BPR or cost analysis should be required.

9. Customer service technology is clearly not something that can simply be imposed on an organization. In a successful implementation, significant involvement is required of the business owner to help address all of the necessary process and business rule definitions, workflow process definitions, technical requirements, interface requirements, configuration management processes, testing and integration activities, training schedules, cutover processes, etc. What resources will DFAS be committing to this program to ensure that all affected users, operators, and managers of the system, as well as the owners of other affected systems within DFAS provide the necessary operational information, process data, new process approvals, system design approvals, system access, and training availability?

Response: DFAS is in the process of developing its corporate strategy for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and we are currently evolving our Business Evolution Plan to manage this issue.

10. Although the contractor will be required to provide 2 hour response in the event of system problems, who is responsible for daily operations regarding the e-mail management system?

Response: Daily operations will be the responsibility of DFAS.

11. Which proposal format/evaluation criteria will be used for this effort - the one starting on page 17 (paragraph 12.0 - Format and Instructions for Proposal Preparation) or the one starting on page 21 (Appendix C - Evaluation Criteria)?

Response: Page 21.

12. How much weight will be placed on price in evaluating the proposal?

Response: There are no numerical weights assigned to price. Award will be made to the offeror whose proposal is determined to be the best value to the Government, price and other factors considered. See Section 15.13.

13. Is the offerer to have a FSC Group 70 GSA Schedule (page 17) or are other FSC Group Schedules allowed (page 24).

Response: Yes.

14. What is Attachment 1? (page 22 paragraph 15.8)

Response: Please disregard this statement.

15. Paragraph 2 Scope - page 2 - Are the 800 customer service representatives all to be turned on at the same time, or are these 800 to be implemented incrementally? If the latter, is the 90 days for the initial implementation or the total 800 (page 28, number 11)?

Response: Yes, the 800 Customer Service Representatives (CSR's) are to be brought on-line within the 90 period.

16. Page 12, paragraph 4.7.3 - Are there any other DFAS ELAN Infrastructure standards than those listed in the paragraph that the system must adhere to?

Response: No

17. Page 12, paragraph 4.8 - Where is the software test plan?

Response: Consider pages 26-35 the initial test plan. The software must meet the **Required Elements** and weighting will be based on the **Desired Elements.**

18. Page 14, paragraph 7.0 – Is there a discussion of existing tools, capabilities, and initiatives in Appendix C other than the list of hardware/software on page 30? Without this, it is difficult to determine which capabilities and investments to consider in the proposed solution.

Response: DFAS intends to operate the software on existing hardware. The configuration of servers and workstations is listed in the SOW.

19. The SOW makes reference to a corporate knowledgebase. What format is the existing data/knowledgebase in?

Response: The corporate knowledgebase is being planned. The corporate database standard for DFAS is Oracle 8.x.

20. Page 30 – what does the Server Hardware in Requirement 19 support?

Response: The server hardware supports DFAS' network infrastructure.

21. Are tasks issued under the BPA expected to be T&M costing or fixed price?

Response: It will depend on the task.

22. Does the system require the database vendor to provide disaster recovery, such as High Availability Data Replication, or the hardware OS and/or RAID vendor ?

Response: As stated in the requirements the database system will be Oracle 8i. This is a contract for software not hardware. RAID is hardware.

23. Does the system require HTML pages to be stored in the database? If it does this would require an ORDMS (Object Relational Database Management System) to support these non-traditional OLTP (On-Line Transaction Processing) data types.

Response: This has not yet been planned for.

24. Will the system that supports the AI require a Data Mining/Drill Down data warehousing tool?

Response: It will require data mining and drill down capability.

25. Does the system require the database or the OS (or both) to perform auditing? Do the auditing requirements need to follow the DOD Orange Book C-2 Auditing specifications?

Response: Auditing is required. DoD Orange Book specifications should be considered.

26. Page 12, paragraph 4.7.3 - Should the last sentence read "Sun Solaris 2.7, or HP-UX 11.0." instead of "Sun Solaris 11.0, or HP-UX 2.7"?

Response: Yes. Solaris 2.7 and HPUX 11.0 are correct.

27. Will the contractor need cleared ATM, SE, or PSO personnel to support this project ?

Response: Yes.

28. Is DFAS expecting a solution in final form with the proposal due on 2 Oct 00 or just a demonstration of current capabilities at an existing site? How does DFAS envision the test system be implemented, and by whom? Should this be included in the cost?

Response: DFAS will not select a final solution on Oct 2, 2000. DFAS plans to test for operational capability at the DFAS Cleveland location. Demonstrations at an existing site other than DFAS is not acceptable.

DFAS would like to load the system on its existing systems, test the software capability based on the desired elements and functionality of the software.

29. What is DFAS using Remedy for today? Will DFAS consider replacing Remedy with an integrated, more robust enterprise solution to improve operational efficiency while simultaneously reduce life cycle maintenance costs?

Response: DFAS uses Remedy for our "trouble desk" functions. DFAS is not locked on any one solution.

30. Page 31, requirement 6. Can you please explain the reference to updating "the latest movies"?

Response: The "latest movies" is just an example of implementation of newer technologies. This could be considered streaming video capability.

31. What is this system requirement referring to? Is it data and/or application downloads to the client? Don't know. However, reading the requirements one can assume that DFAS wants a web-based thin client front-end. Why a 5.5 mb download limit?

Response: The system should be web-based. Download limits are set to reduce bandwidth overload.

32. Page 29, requirements 16,17 - Of the 200 initial data entry users and 10 query users, how many concurrent users does DFAS expect will be using the system?

Response: Concurrent users are approximately 40.

33.Of the total number of seats (800), how many of these are expected to be concurrent users?

Response: 200

34. Is the E-mail management system in line with the new vision/strategy and operating organization structure/business evolution that Mr. Bloom, the DFAS Director has outlined and is implementing now?

Response: Yes.

35.Has DISA signed up to a transition plan for any conversion of services/data necessary when implementing the e-mail management system?

Response: Yes.

36.. There is no COTR identified from DFAS to approve if the work performed is acceptable. The current SOW provides only contracting officer approval. Does DFAS plan to specifically identify DFAS personnel to function as COTR?

Response: Yes.

37. The SOW identifies all major centers to receive this system. What is HQ and the multiple Operation Locations roles and how will they perform joint planning?

Response: DFAS HQ and the OpLocs are involved in the development of this system.

38.HOW MANY MESSAGES PER MONTH WILL THE SYSTEM BE EXPECTED TO HANDLE? (NEEDED FOR SIZING)?

Response: Approximately 10,000

39.What is the profile of the 800 users? Are they all using the system 8 hours a day?

Response: The profile of the 800 users is that they are Customer Service Representatives, who use the system 8 hours a day.

40.In the out years, what is the rationale for purchasing completely separate systems? Another alternative would be to purchase one Internet-enable system that allows CSR connections from anywhere.

Response: There is no plan for DFAS to purchase separate e-mail management systems.

41.Are there truly 800*9 additional users?

Response: Each location will have varied numbers of users.

42. Page 22, Paragraph 15.6, Submission of Test E-Mail Management System

The government is stating that it will "keep the Awardee's equipment... after award". The size of equipment necessary for the functional test is not comparable to the size needed to accommodate sustained operation over a number of years (memory, disk space, database licensing, etc.). Can we submit a reasonable-sized test system for test purposes only, and then provide an appropriately sized operational system after award?

Response: Yes.

43.Please explain the relationship between this requirement and 15.12.3.1 Ease of Installation. Is the government requesting a fully installed system to be delivered to the Test Lab? If so, how will the government perform the installation test described in 15.12.3.1? Will the Awardee be responsible for explaining how to uninstall, and then re-install our product?

Response: DFAS expects to have the software installed on DFAS hardware. The vendor will assist with installation and uninstall if necessary.

44. Page 34, Paragraph 5.12.3.1, Ease of Installation

Please explain the intent of this section: is this for installation of the server software or the client application on individual desktops? If it is for the server software, what is the reason for assigning such a large point value to an action that will be taken only once? Does installation refer only to physical installation of the software, or also of configuration of options such as users, queues, managed mailboxes, etc.? Does installation refer only to the proposed product, or also to operating systems?

Response: The intent of this section is for both server and client applications. The installation also refers to the physical ease of installation as well as the configuration of the application. It does not refer to the operating system. The OS must be compatible with existing DFAS systems.

45. Is the government open to using an alternative method, such as the following:

1)   The government provides to offerors applicable site information, such as IP address for the Awardee's product, mail server names, and email addresses to be managed.

2)   The government provides to offerors applicable test configuration information, such as names and roles of users, service queues, and business logic for managing messages.

3)   The offerors install and configure their products and deliver them to the Test Lab for evaluation.

Response: Ease of installation means that we can install and configure the product based on step by step instructions provided in the vendor's installation manual. If we must call for technical support to find required installation/configuration steps that the vendor failed to document, then the product shall be scored lower. Multiple instances of poor or missing documentation will result in successively lower scores. If the product is so difficult to install and configure that the vendor must either pre install it or send an engineer to our site to fix it, then the product will fail this portion of the test.

46. Page 28, Paragraph 15.12.2.1, Item 15, Interface Requirements

Do these requirements imply that the Awardee must deliver an Application Program Interface (API) as well as the core product? If so, do the Ease of Installation requirements in Section 15.12.3.1 apply to the API?

Response: Yes, if necessary.

47.Please clarify the second bullet, in regards to POP3. Does this mean that POP3 may not be used internally by the Awardee's product? Does this mean that POP3 may not be used for interconnection to the organizational email servers? What is the reason for excluding this Internet standard from the allowable responses?

Response: Our security requirements preclude the use of POP3 due to its vulnerability to hackers. All mail transmissions are via SMTP or X.400. Mail resides on the server and is not downloaded to the client.

48. Please clarify the second bullet, in regards to SNMP. For what purposes is SNMP required? Hardware and operating system control? Software control? Usage statistics? Other?

 Response: Our major usage of SNMP is to monitor remote systems and to detect alarms in the event of system errors or failures.

49.Please clarify the third bullet, in regards to Remedy. For what purposes will the interface to Remedy be used? How will this interface be tested?

Response: The interface would be an integration tool to reduce disparity between and amongst DFAS systems. The goal for DFAS is to become as homogeneous as possible. The product will be tested to determine if the two applications are capable of communicating between them.

49. Please clarify the fourth bullet, in regards to an Integrated Development Environment (IDE). What is the purpose of this requirement? Our proposed product is a fully COTS solution which requires no development. How will this requirement be tested?

Response: An integrated development environment (IDE) supports various programming models (HTML, XML, Java, ActiveX, HDML, DHTML, Cascading Style Sheets, Java Script, VB Script, and so on) via a universal editor or best-of-breed tools. The product must not be proprietary.

51.Please clarify the sixth bullet, in regards to security. At which points are auto message encryption required? LDAP is not primarily a security standard; are we to interpret this statement as a requirement for PKI? If so, at which points is PKI required, and which certificate authority will be used?

Response: Encryption will not be required for this effort.

52.Please clarify the seventh bullet, in regards to application isolation. Is this requirement applicable only for integration with external systems, or does it describe the required internal architecture? If it applies to the internal architecture, how will it be tested? Are there any mobile/disconnected user requirements?

Response: DFAS wishes to be an Open System, therefore, our goal is to have the ability to service internal and external customers, regardless of their systems. For this effort we will only test our internal requirements, but want the capability to reach our external customers with the same ease, capability, and products.

53.Please clarify the eighth bullet, in regards to load balancing. Is the intent of this requirement that the proposed product demonstrate load balancing, or that the product's internal design adhere to the "working definition" stated in this paragraph? How will this requirement be tested, as the offerors are required to deliver only a single system to the test lab?

Response: The purpose of this function is to dynamically load balance and scale the CPU to meet peak load requirements. This capability can not be truly tested for this exercise, but DFAS reserves the right to test.

54. Please clarify the ninth bullet, in regards to state management. Is this requirement applicable only at the operating system and inter-process communication levels? What is the purpose of this requirement? How will this requirement be tested?

Response: This is a fault tolerance requirement. The system shall have the capability perform at all load levels and to perform without system failure due to various foreseen problems. State management provides the capability to know the "state/condition" of the system. The independent state server manages this capability.

55.. Page 30, Paragraph 15.12.2.1, Item 17, Interactive Query Requirements

Does this requirement imply that we must price and propose 10 simultaneous licenses for the report-generation engine?

Response: If this is how the pricing scheme is configured, yes.

56. Page 31, Paragraph 15.12.2.2, Item 11, Desired Elements

How does the government propose to "continually assess the communication needs of the e-mailers"?

Response: Communication via several methods, in-person, phone, mail, etc.

57. Page 31, Paragraph 15.12.2.2, Item 19, Desired Elements

Does the "smaller download configuration" include: software, FTP, email attachment, etc?

Response: Yes, but this will vary.

58. Page 31, Paragraph 15.12.2.2, Item 23, Desired Elements

 Does "privacy control through cookie management" apply to customer representatives managers?

Response: N/A

59. Page 31, Paragraph 15.12.2.2, Items 24-25, Desired Elements

Does this imply that the eventual goal of the solution is to provide a personal portal interface for the customer representatives and customers?

Response: This is a potential alternative.

60. This SOW document addresses contacts to the DFAS Customer Contact System using an E-mail system. The document discusses future additions of voice, Web, Fax, and correspondence added to this system, yet the test is only being done for e-mail. The SOW should either address an entire Contact System with all media included in the response and test, or have a way to test the openness of the e-mail system to make sure it conforms with other forms of contact medium as they are added to overall system. Is this (and if yes, by what methodology) openness going to be evaluated at the DFAS EPET Lab?

Response: This SOW is only for the selection of the e-mail management system. The evaluation will be based on the weighting of the Required/Desired elements and ease of installation.

61. Section 2.0 Scope

(First Paragraph) How many of the 800 customer service representatives will be taking e-mail contacts? How much e-mail will be sent to these agents?

Response: All CSR's are capable of taking e-mail. The CSR receives the mail traffic pertinent to their area of responsibility.

61. (Bullet 1) denotes a "myriad of media", could DFAS specifically define the breadth of **myriad**?

Response: Customer contact may come in the form of e-mail, phone call, hardcopy mail, in-person visit, etc.

62. (Bullet 2) mentions a "standard formatted inquiry". Could DFAS be more descriptive on this?

Response: The standard format is a DFAS format for responding to customer inquiries.

64. Section 4.1.1 General Input Requirements

(First Paragraph) Is the customer (sender of the e-mail) an internal or external customer? What is meant by "The product supplied should be web-based"? Does DFAS mean it should work in a thin client environment at the service representative's desktop?

Response: The customer can be internal or external. Web-based is self explanatory. DFAS is attempting to become a "thin-client" environment.

65. (Paragraph 2) "Live-chats and VoIP for future expansion". Is this type of interface for web contacts as opposed to e-mail contacts?

Response: VoIP will be used in DFAS for the benefit of both the customer and DFAS. There will be no distinguishing between type of contact.

66. Please describe any requirements for warranty/maintenance response, hotline support and periods of coverage?

Response: Includes software "fixes" and upgrades. Periods of coverage include full term of the PBA, purchased on an annual basis.

67. 4.3.2 Specific Output Requirements

What is turnaround time? Time of closure of e-mail message? When is the contact closed (when the agent replies or when the customers sends concurrence that the response was acceptable)?

Response: When the customer sends concurrence that the reponse was acceptable.

68. 4.5.1 Functions

What is the time frame for the future scalability/expandability?

Response: DFAS is planning to expand capabilities over a two (2) year period.

69. 4.6 Training

The SOW states that "Software maintenance will also be provided by the vendor." For what periods of time does DFAS want maintenance coverage (for the entire length of the BPA)?

Response: Yes, see item 66, above.

70. 12.2.6.1 Contractors shall provide the following information

 (Section A) When implementing a software solution, each integration will be different depending on variables associated such as existing hardware, software, communications network, and existing databases. The vendor can provide a list of the types of skill levels associated with the integration and the pricing for these skill levels, but because of the above statement it will be difficult to determine the number of hours needed without sufficient review of the project. What type of planning process do you propose that will allow the contractor to give an accurate number of integration hours required for the task? When will DFAS provide the detailed requirements for the Lab implementation to allow the vendors to provide an accurate estimate the integration effort associated with this project?

Response: DFAS will supply the vendor the required information after the initial tool selection. Planning will be based on the requirements of the Cleveland Center.
Detailed requirements will only be supplied to the chosen vendor.

71. 15.6 Submission of Test E-mail Management System

Delivery services often require a telephone number for an address. What telephone number should be referenced for the DFAS EPET Lab.

Response: To be provided at the time of acceptance.

72. 15.12.2.1 Required Elements

(Number 19) This section describes the current hardware/software/communications environment. Will the e-mail system that is proposed for this solution reside on the DFAS servers and desktops? Are the list hardware and software items the systems that will house the e-mail system? If the hardware/software requirements of the proposed e-mail system are different than the listed hardware and software, will DFAS purchase the required infrastructure?

Response: DFAS will provide all hardware. If the application requires hardware that is not DFAS standard or compatible, it will not be considered.

73. 15.12.3.1 Ease of Installation

The Government indicates that "offerors may not send a representative to the test lab to assist with the equipment or have any contact with the evaluators during this process…". The type of solution being sought will most likely not be plug and play, and will involve some initial installation and setup by the vendor who proposes it.   What are DFAS' plans to accommodate this, or does the above statement refer only to post installation and setup contact?

Response: It is intended to utilize this application directly out of the box. Support should be available via standard support numbers.See also, Question 43.

74.   Please confirm the SOW's assigned number is "MDA220-00-Q-0034". Confirmed.

- Throughout this solicitation, specifications are provided for various hardware including PC's and servers. Is it the Government's expectation that the successful vendor will provide all such hardware as part of their solution, or does DFAS intend to reuse their existing equipment? Response: The vendor shall not provide any hardware.

75. What type of e-mail solution (Microsoft Exchange, etc.) does DFAS deploy/plan to deploy? Is this system POP-3 compliant?

Response: Our installed mail system uses MS Exchange mail servers with Outlook 98/2000 clients. POP3 is forbidden due to its security vulnerabilities. All mail transmissions are via SMTP or X.400. Mail resides on the server and is not downloaded to the client.

76. p. 5, Item 4.1.2.h, Please clarify the reporting requirements for "domain"

Response: A database that can be administered as a group.

77 .p. 6, Item 4.2.2, "Routing decisions include option to transfer to other systems". Please clarify what is meant by "other systems."

Response: System must be interoperable with other applications. Must not be proprietary.

78. 4.1.2-J states the system must have artificial intelligence. Could you provide a more descript definition of the AI requirement.

Response: The system must use artificial intelligence/intelligent agents. The intelligent agents are an engine for implementation of custom automation strategies. The intelligent agent provides the ability to develop unique automated e-mail management functionality through integration with existing databases and business applications.

79. Do have to set up a pre-configured client and server (hardware) for EPET testing? If so, do you want us to send a loaded version of Outlook so you can use the email message software.

Response: No.

80. 4.6 Training. Please verify your requirements. This section list two requirements for training: 1.) training for system administrators and, 2.) training for agents supervisors, and partner directorate personnel. This section also lists two requirements for consultation services: 1.) consulting services provided for individual unique cases and, 2.) Software maintenance. Should our proposal reflect a plan for training and consultation services and price proposal as a part of the first phase- email message management?

Response: Yes, pricing should include these; or, identify the availabilities in the GSA contract.

81.5.5 Labor Reporting System (LRS) Inputs. This is a Deliverable Requirement for a time and material type contract for labor/services. Does this mean that services for phase 1 should be time and material? When is the Management Plan due? As part of the response to the RFP or as a first deliverable after the award of the contract?

Response: Services, if required, for phase 1 could be time and material. Management Plan has been deleted.

82.6.2 Management Plan (g) – states that the contractor must have a plan for task order transition from the current contractor. However 7.0 (GFI) states that DFAS has a number of existing tools, capabilities, and initiatives that are currently in use to satisfy some portion of the customer service management requirements. Is there one incumbent in charge of all of these initiatives?

Response: The requirement for a Management Plan has been deleted.

83.7.0 (GFI) states that the contractor shall consider the capabilities (Appendix C) and investment in the initiatives that are currently in use to satisfy some portion of the customer service management requirements. Can you provide a clearer definition of some of these initiatives?

Response: No.

84.See 13.0 and 15.11.1. 13.0 lists a page limitation and 15.11.1 does not? Which supercedes?

Response: Section 13 is being deleted.

85.In 15.11.1, you have described the desired volumes. In 12.2.4 and 12.2.5, you desire a Management Plan and Technical Approach. Should that appear in Volume I-GENERAL or Volume II- Test Equipment? 15.11.1 gives the impression that there is no written portion to Volume II, as it is the test package that is to be shipped to EPET.

Response: Sections 12 and 13 are being deleted.

86.13.0 lists the Evaluation Factors for the proposal. Can you confirm the following regarding the organization of the proposal:

Evaluation factor	Appears in ?
TECHNICAL APPROACH	Vol. I or II?
PAST PERFORMANCE	Vol. III
MANAGEMENT PLAN	Vol. I and II?
PRICE	Vol. IV

Response: Sections 12 and 13 are being deleted.

87.How does 15.12.2 (page 25) fit into the overall rating of the Technical Factors?

Response: This page describes the weighting factors for the technical evaluation.

88.15.9 gives a Quantity/Delivery Schedule for a Email Management System. This indicates the requirements for the current year and the outyears. However, will our price proposal contain the price/schedule for just FY00, as this is the only SOW thus far?

Response: Pricing for the current year and out-years should be based on a discount structure. Yes, we need the discount structure for the out-years also.

89.In Reference to 2.0 Scope, over the life of the 5 year BPA, approximately what portion of dollars do you estimate will be spent on hardware, software and services?

Response: DFAS will attempt to use existing hardware or purchase what is necessary. Software and services will be purchased based on need from this BPA.

90. Reference: Page 13, Article 5.6, Deliverables/Delivery Schedule

This vendor requests that the requirement for submission of the monthly cost report, CDRL A001, be changed from the fifth of each month to the fifteenth of each month. This vendor's accounting system is not updated with the prior month's information until on or around the tenth of each month. Therefore, this vendor would not be able to provide the Government with a Monthly Cost Report by the fifth of each month, as the required information is not available.

Response: This is acceptable.

91.Reference: Page 19, Article 13, Evaluation Factors
Reference: Page 23, Article 15.11, Proposal Format

Article 13 states the following:
Factor 1: Technical Approach – 50 page limitation

Factor 2: Past Performance- 10 page limitation

Factor 3: Management Plan – 5 page limitation
Factor 4: Price

Article 15.11 states that Part Number/Title 3, Past Performance has no page limitation. Please clarify.

Response: Section 13.0 is being deleted.

92.Reference: Page 24, Article 15.11.2, Part IV, Price

This Article states, "*This PART shall address all the information as* indicated *in paragraph 12.3 below."* This vendor is unable to find the reference to paragraph 12.3. Please advise where (what page), this information can be found.

Response: Section 12 is being deleted.

93.Reference: Page 24, Article 15.11.1, Part I, General

This vendor recommends that DFAS consider allowing the bidders to provide a Best Value Statement as part of the response to this section. The Best Value Statement could be limited to ten (10) pages; however, this would give DFAS a concise summary of why a vendor's proposal represents the "best value" solution for the Government

Response: This statement can be added to Part I, General, outlined in 15.11.2.

94.Reference: Page 2, Article 2.0, Scope

This sections states:

"The initial procurement will be to satisfy the electronic mail message management requirements for approximately 800 customer service representatives at a selected DFAS location."

How many divisions and business areas are included in the 800-person population that will require specialized information distribution? Also, Page 28, section 15.12.2.1, paragraph 16, mentions that there will be 200 users initially. Please clarify the 200 versus 800 users.

Response: Initially, approximately 200 users will use the e-mail management system. The 800 users are total identified user base at our first site. The remaining 600 will be incrementally brought on during the course of the 1st year.

95.Reference: Page 5, Article 4.1.2.j, Specific Requirements for Handling Incoming Inquiries

This paragraph states: "The system must have Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI provides the ability to develop unique automated Email management functionality through integration with existing databases and business applications." Is this a requirement to map the system to the DFAS Corporate Information Infrastructure (DCII) Corporate Database and or directly to DFAS applications?

Response: The DCII is only an infrastructure that the DFAS applications use as a baseline or foundation. The DCII is a common operating environment. Therefore, any applications or tools that DFAS brings into the organization must comply first with the DCII and be interoperable with our applications.

96.Reference: Page 12, Article 5.3, Managerial Best Practices Integration

This paragraph states: "Managerial Best Practices Integration. Identify and integrate best practices relating to strategic planning, resource management, configuration management, software quality assurance, project planning, project tracking and oversight, risk assessment, etc." Who will identify and manage the best practices data, Government or contractor?

Response: The contractor.

97.Reference: Page 28, Article 15.12.2.15, Interface Requirements

In the interface requirements paragraph, Remedy is the only application that identified to interface with the system. Is this in addition to what is required as stated in paragraphs 4.1.2.g, h, & j?

Response: Yes, the product should be interoperable with existing DFAS products. We would want to take advantage of all information to make better decisions in order to assist our customer base.

98.Reference: Page 28, Article 15.12.2.1.15, Interface Requirements

In the interface requirements paragraph, Remedy is referenced as the software tool being used to support the DFAS Customer Contact Center (CCC). Is the intention to have the same personnel responding to both e-mail and phone inquiries.

Response: The intent is to develop a 360 degree profile of the customer. There may or may not be the same CSR answering inquiries regardless of the type of inquiry. In other words, it should not matter who responds to the inquiry, the information should be accessible by any CSR in order for DFAS to provide the customer satisfactory service.

99.Reference: Page 36, Article 15.12.5.3, Sample Pricing Proposal Layout
In the first sentence of the paragraph states "Offers shall clearly designate whether the e-mail management system." This sentence seems incomplete. Does the government request pricing only for the initial procurement, the e-mail management system? Please clarify.

Response: Pricing is based on a discount structure to the offeror's GSA schedule.

Response: Sentence will be deleted. See response to question 87.

100. Section 15.6 requires the submission of a Test E-Mail Management System at the time of proposal submission. Section 15.12.3 further states that the EPET Lab Test Plan will count 50% of the total technical evaluation score. The test plan includes two phases: Ease of Installation and Interoperability Point Assignment.

In the Ease of Installation, you receive more points for successful installation and proper configuration the less outside references are used (reference manuals, tech support, etc.). However, nowhere does this section indicate what environment the test system is going to be installed in. This offeror would like to develop our own test plan in preparation for executing in the Government's environment, but cannot without the knowledge of what the Government's environment is.

Further, The Interoperability evaluation again states that the offeror's system will be tested, the results of which will be entered into a matrix, and a total score will be calculated. Again, to better prepare for this test, this offeror requests that the Government disclose what test elements will be evaluated, and how does the testing work. The QoS Interoperability table on page 35 of the RFP tends to indicate that the Government will be testing the operability of one offerors system with another offeror's system, not instead with the Government's environment.

This offeror suggests that for the Government to truly evaluate the installation and interoperability of a offeror's solution, that offeror's should be provided sufficient information which will allow them to correctly integrate and configure the system. After all, a large part of this overall solution is the implementation of the solution into the Government's environment. Upon award, this offeror does not expect (and the Government likewise, I am sure), the Government to install and setup these systems. Instead, the solution will be setup and installed by the offeror. Why should the test system be any different?

Response: While we may chose to have the vendor do the initial installation, the EPET would have to develop and document a specific installation procedure that the vendor would then follow. This would allow us to insure that all equipment was installed per DFAS ELAN standards. Additionally, in the instance that after the system was installed and running additional equipment or replacement equipment needed to be installed we would not need to re-hire the contractor to come back and do subsequent installations. Using the EPET installation documentation, our Local LAN Teams could effect additional installs themselves. Therefore, Ease of Installation is a valid criteria and the vendor should realize that we will be deeply involved in any installation procedures which are developed and implemented.

101. We would like to respond to this opportunity as a prime contractor; however we are forced to subcontract to a large business because of the numbers and types of past performance and

reference requirements. As currently written, the RFP is unnecessarily restrictive. Robust message management system technology is recent and improving rapidly. We believe that one year of experience in this arena is adequate. Also offering this service for a similar size organization to DFAS is restrictive. The size of the environment is not a valid measure of the company's capability, but rather a measure of the system selected for implementation. Assuming that no changes are made to make the RFP less restrictive, SII has the following questions:

Can the (5) contract references include the total for the composite team, and are the references restricted to the proposed equipment/services? If not, we request the number of references be reduced to (2). Request a proposal extension of 2 weeks in order to provide the government our best effort technical proposal at a competitive price.

Response: The contract references may include a composite team.